

THE BEST IN THE LAND

(Continued from Page One.)

Tarkio Drainage District.

At the January term, 1910, of our circuit court, the petition was filed, praying for the incorporation. Of course, there were objectors and these were represented by H. B. Williams and Frank Petree, while the petitioners were represented by W. H. Richards and John W. Stokes.

The objectors succeeded in obtaining a change of venue to Andrew county, where the case was heard by Judge Burns, and on Saturday, March 5, 1910, a decree of incorporation was handed down. This decree excluded from the district 80 acres belonging to Fritz Ideker; 40 of William Ideker; 50 of Henry Dege; 24 of Henry Peters, and some few other tracts. Following this was the filing of the decree with the circuit clerk of Holt county, and the secretary of state, which was done within the twenty day limit as provided by the drainage laws.

Then came a meeting of the land owners in the proposed drainage district, for the purpose of electing its first board of drainage commissioners. This meeting was held at the Center school house, on Saturday, April 9th, 1910. The meeting was presided over by Isaac M. Minton, with George W. Poynter as its secretary. The election resulted in the choice of the following to constitute the board that would have the direction, with the advice of its attorney, of the greatest and perhaps the most extensive drainage project within our state:

Lot Brown, for one year,
John A. Buck, for two years,
John E. Slater, for three years,
Thomas F. Pebley, for four years,
E. B. Cunningham, for five years.

John E. Slater was chosen president of the board and Lot Brown, secretary and treasurer. At a subsequent meeting, held at Craig, April 13, 1910, the necessary steps were taken to secure an engineer, and Messrs. Peterman & Seitz, of St. Joseph, were employed, who secured the aid of Wm. M. Morris. They immediately began their survey, and in the course of a few months had their profiles and estimates ready. The estimate fixed the cost at approximately \$150,000.

John Taylor, of Forbes township; A. W. VanCamp, of Minton, and J. W. Patterson, of Hickory township, were named as commissioners to assess benefits and damages to the land owners, and after much labor, trials and tribulations, they completed their labors.

Then came the letting of the contract for the digging of the Big Tarkio Canal. It was awarded Rogers & Black, on December 12, 1910, at 7 cents per cubic yard. Messrs. Rogers & Black anticipated the work, began the construction of their dredge boats and laid the keels in August, 1910, and on the 1st of January, 1911, they were under full steam and at work.

The bonds were ordered at an election held to the amount of \$150,000 and sold at a premium of \$750 and bought by the Compton Bonding Company, of St. Louis. They bear 6 per cent interest and run for 20 years. They bear the signatures of John E. Slater, as president, and Lot Brown, as secretary. They are in \$500 denominations.

The drainage district association purchased the ditching machine belonging to the Mound City Land Company, and with this machine they are digging the laterals.

The Ponderous Machinery.

The monster dredger is now at work, which THE SENTINEL reporter viewed last week, rushing the work of completing the great water way to its mouth, the Missouri river, which the contractors hope to finish by July or August, 1912, working weather, and when completed thousands of acres of land that was practically worthless for cultivation, will be restored to productiveness.

They now have about one-half of the seven miles already completed. Their first pay dirt on the enterprise was thrown from the monster dipper on January 10, 1911. It is 100 feet wide, and a depth varying from 6 to 16 feet, in conformity with the topography. The levee has a base of 50 feet and 6 to 11 feet in height.

The machine used—the great dredger, cost Messrs. Rogers & Black \$30,000 at the factory in Marion, O., and with its necessary timbers, required 11 cars in its transportation, and a freight bill of \$1,200 to land it near the Atchison line above Corning, the railroad putting in special trackage for unloading.

The hull of the dredge boat is 41x100 feet, and having an 8 foot draft. It has five bulk heads front fore and aft. The sides are built of solid timbers 7 inches thick and those of the bow have a thickness of 10 inches and the sides and stern are of the same thickness.

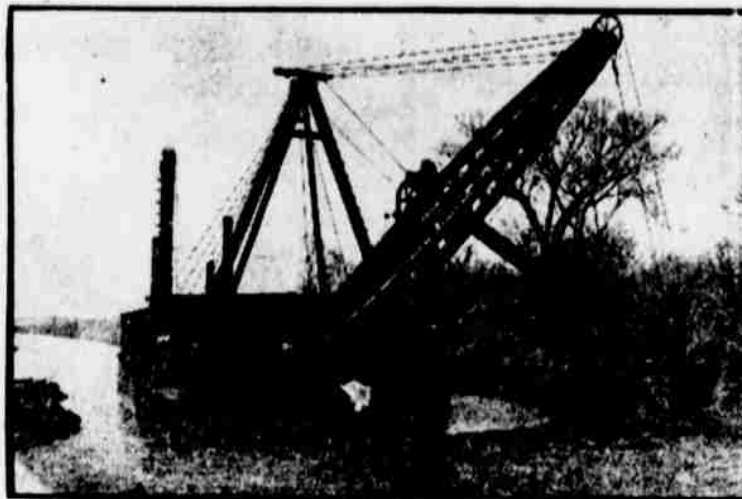
The A brace stands in a plumb of 50 feet. The boom is 90 feet long and the dipper arm 54 feet; the dipper has a capacity of 2 1/2 cubic yards, and is



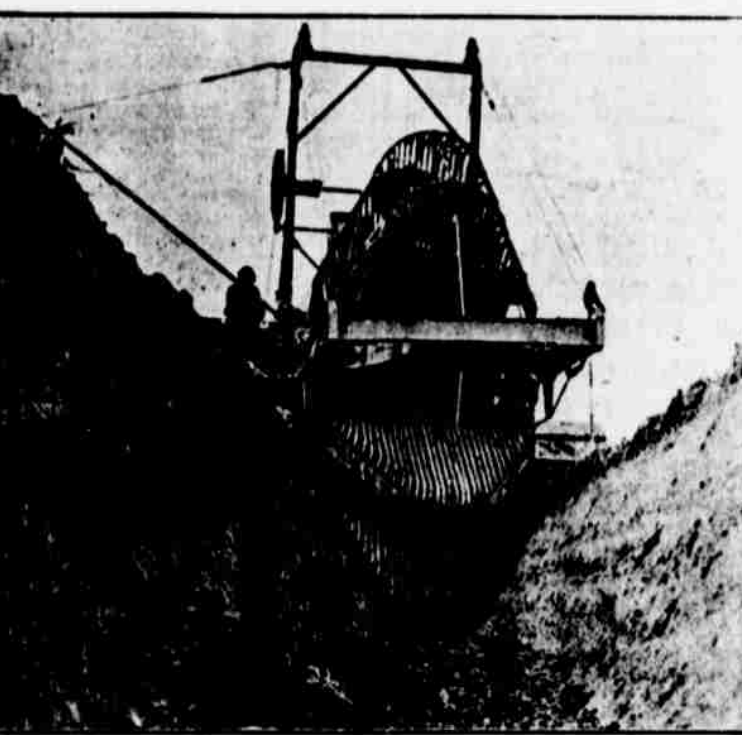
Left to Right: John Rogers, Contractor; Ralph Ashburn, Dipperman; Chas. S. Black, Contractor.



As the Canal now looks.



The Monster Ditching Machine.



Digging the Laterals.



Digging the Laterals.

operated by a pair of independent engines, the most perfect piece of mechanism of its kind in existence. The dipper moves from 1200 to 1800 cubic yards of dirt daily. It plows its way along the fields for 500 feet, on the one side, and then its monster anchors are released and the dredger backs up and does the work on the opposite side, and thus this is kept up day and night, with the exception of

chairs 3'x30 and 40 feet long, and sunk to a depth of 15 to 20 feet, holding the great dredger to its place firmly, and are operated by machinery. Its floats are 4x8 feet and 30 feet long, bolted to the dredger independent of the hull proper, thus giving buoyancy to the dredger. It is also supplied with a forge, and they do their own blacksmithing.

To operate this great machine, day and night, requires two crews, of four men to each crew. The first and most important of these are the two "runners"—Ralph Ashburn, of Mound City, and Ed. Heck, of Peoria, Ill. Two cranesmen, Jesse Summers, of Virginia, and Jake Millison, of Forest City. Two firemen, Charles Gilleland, and Bert Golden, of Mound City. Two deck hands, Wm. Edwards, of Forest City, and Arthur Wormack, of Forbes.

In addition to this dredge-boat force, there are required three men to keep the coal supply to the furnace. These men, Elzy Bale, of Peoria, Ill., and Rand J. Bumpus, of Corning, wheel the coal from the levee and load in barges, which are floated down to the dredger. It requires two teamsters, Wm. Hahn and John Swan, to haul the coal from Corning, some three miles distant, for the dredger; some 7 tons of coal is consumed daily, which requires about \$425 monthly for the coal bill, including the freight. The labor bill amounts to between \$700 and \$800 monthly, the two runners receiving the highest compensation, \$125 per month each.

How They Live.

In addition to the dredger is a "house boat," where the employees and contractors live—this is floated along down the canal, at easy distance from the dredger. It is 18x30 feet; has six rooms including sleeping quarters, kitchen and dining room combined. Over this Mrs. Ralph Ashburn presides, who is assisted by Mrs. Bert Golden, who are paid liberal salaries to cook and care for the household, for this large force of employees. These ladies are excellent cooks and housekeepers; their meals are of the most wholesome and inviting kind—that kind that makes bone and muscle, and it is but a large family, presided over by sunny, agreeable ladies, who are fully equipped for the obligations that come to them.

The Contractors.

In all gigantic enterprises there must be the guiding hand and the genius behind to bring success. In this, the drainage commissioners have been fortunate indeed, in securing Messrs. Rogers & Black, who are brothers-in-law, to undertake this great enterprise, and push it to a successful conclusion. They are practical men—men who have made it a business for years, to dig drainage canals. The greatest of these prior to the digging of the present Big Tarkio canal in Holt county, were the Squaw Creek and Mill Creek canals, and these were dug by Mr. Rogers, and his work was so satisfactory that the Big Tarkio commissioners did not look for any others—they simply agreed on price, and told Messrs. Rogers & Black, the "job was theirs"—it was a genuine case of "by their work ye shall know them."

They give their personal attention to every detail of the digging, and are both thorough-going business men. They receive their pay for the work each month upon estimates certified as to the yardage excavated by the engineer for the commissioners. This varies from 80,000 to 90,000 cubic yards, and the board issues their warrant for the amount on a basis of 7 cents per cubic yard.

John Rogers, the senior of the firm, was born in Mason county, Illinois, in May, 1861, just shortly after the firing upon Fort Sumpter. He was raised on the farm, and stayed at it until he was 23 years old. He then taught a few years, and in 1880 began his career in the dredging business, doing much work in the South, principally in the state of Louisiana. He then came to Holt county, locating at Mound City, and in December, 1904, began the work of digging the Squaw Creek drainage canal, throwing the first dirt on February 23, 1905, and completed it July 7, 1906. April, 1908, he began the digging of the Mill Creek drainage canal, and completed this job in December, 1908.

Mr. Rogers is married; and they reside in Mound City. His wife prior to marriage was Miss Ida M. Johns, and they were married in Illinois. They have one son, Charles, and he is perhaps as fine a specimen of the physical young man as you will likely meet in a month's journey. He stands 6-3 in his stocking feet and weighs 240 pounds. Both his wife and son are practicing osteopaths.

Charles S. Black is the junior of the firm; he married a sister of Mr. Rogers, and is 46 years old. He, too, has had wide experience in ditch-making, and for many years prior to his joining Mr. Rogers was with Mr. Foohy & Co., of Fort Wayne, Ind. He is married and his postoffice address is Corning, Mo. They have a son, who

is an undertaker at Peoria, Ill. Mr. Black looks after the operating departments of the ditcher, while Mr. Rogers is the accountant.

Up to the present they have moved 704,859 cubic yards of dirt, notwithstanding the loss of fully two months' time, which is about one-half the amount of dirt expected to be removed.

They expect to reach the Missouri river, some time in July or August, tapping that stream at a point where years ago Marquette, a landing place in those days for steamboats, stood but was confiscated by the ravenous Missouri. They will cease digging when within about 50 feet of the river; move back their dredger and house boat to the nearest road, and dismantle. They will blast the unfinished 50 feet, thus making the outlet. When this is done they and the people interested will celebrate the occasion with a big jubilee and barbecue.

The present board of commissioners is composed of John E. Slater, president; George W. Poynter, secretary and treasurer; Bigelow; Thomas Pebley, Craig; Jno. A. Buck, Corning; Henry Rable, Craig, with W. H. Richards as attorney.

These ditches, these drainage districts are splendid monuments to their creators, and here we will tell of the good men do, while the living man may hear of it. Many men joined their efforts to accomplish the work, now so well along towards its completion. At the head of the list, we would mention W. H. Richards, but his efforts, his initiative would have been impossible, impractical, if other men had not put their shoulders to the wheel and pushed, and kept pushing. The work is a monument to such pushers of the enterprise as John E. Slater, John A. Buck, Thos. Pebley, T. B. Cunningham, H. A. Dankers, J. F. Bridgeman, Sam Kalm, now deceased; John Hall, E. K. Allen, Lot Brown, John Stadler, W. J. Randall, Henry Revel, F. W. Walter, Harmon Ohlensahlen, and others.

The canal will be spanned by five steel bridges, which will be constructed by the district at an estimated total cost of \$12,000. They will each be 100 foot spans with 30-foot approaches. After completion it will devolve on the county to keep them in repair.

The first will be located east of Corning near the Adkins place. The second where the railroad crosses the big ditch two miles southeast of Corning.

The third will be two miles below the railroad at the Wm. Ideker farm. The fourth, three miles west, and close to the foot of Schulte lake.

The fifth, three and a half miles southwest of Craig, at the Wellman farm and about a mile above the mouth of the ditch.

The board of supervisors has given its time and much labor in behalf of this great undertaking, working faithfully for the future welfare of all. They with their attorney have cheerfully met all opposition and borne criticism, believing that when the drainage canal is complete, and that this almost empire—shall bear its abundant crops, that then will come reward.

Bonds have been voted to the amount of \$365,000 for the construction of the various drainage ditches as follows:

Squaw Creek.....	\$ 80,000
Nodaway No. 1.....	50,000
Mill Creek.....	40,000
Big Tarkio.....	150,000
Little Tarkio.....	45,000
Total.....	\$365,000

Some History.

In Holt county numerous plans for ditches have been proposed during the past thirty years. Some have proven effective, but in many cases they were designed for only temporary relief.

The first ditch proposed was known as the Corning ditch, petitioned for by Horace Martin, John Hollenbeck, Henry Roselius, F. W. Walter, Henry Dankers and Holland Bardwell and filed with the county court at the August term, 1872. The court named Wm. M. Morris, D. VanWormer and Geo. Kershner as commissioners, who reported the scheme as impracticable and they were discharged. The case was re-opened, a new set of commissioners was named and at the December term of the court the work was ordered. Joel Hester was the surveyor at the time and by reason of a mistake of 10,000 yards in his estimate, much litigation followed. The ditch tapped the Dankers and Walters lakes, thence southeasterly to the head of the Schulte lake. It was about 1 1/2 miles in length. The county at that time paid its share of the expense, which was \$1,000.

The second ditch proposed was known as the "Sheridan ditch," petitioned for by Patrick Fitzmaurice and 65 others, at the September term, 1874, of the county court, Joel Hester, Jeptha Martin and J. M. Ford were named as commissioners. It began

at the head of the north channel of the outlet of Tarkio lake; thence northwest around the west point of Kimsey's Island, west of Fitzmaurice; then northwest to gr. sec. corner of south side of sec. 11, 60, 39, thence northwest as far as may be necessary to drain that part of the county overflowed by the Penny lake.

Then came the Forbes ditch which is termed a dry land ditch to carry water to the Missouri river. This is a small surface ditch and answers the purpose for which it was made.

Later came Craig ditches Nos. 1 and 2. No. 1 is still a good ditch and carries the water from the Little Tarkio. No. 2 is not existing, but the Little Tarkio drainage district of today, part of which is now dug and bonds authorized for its construction have been ordered, is the outcome of No. 2.

Then came the digging of a private ditch, from the Little Tarkio, west of Forest City through nearly three miles of slough, ponds and low lands to reach an outlet into the Missouri river. The late Thomas Cottier and our present county clerk, F. L. Jeller, obtained right of way, 100 feet wide for this ditch, and dug it with the help of others who subscribed a few dollars or a few days' work. It is doing good work.

Another ditch was dug a little later near Mound City by the Mound City Land and Stock Company, but it failed, because no outlet was furnished.

In 1891, a survey was made for a ditch from where Squaw Creek enters the bottom above Mound City, a distance of some 14 miles to the Missouri river below Forest City; so much opposition was shown that the petition was withdrawn.

In 1900, the Big Tarkio Drainage district was incorporated, and a partial system of drainage was adopted. There was, of course, more or less opposition and after much litigation, it was discontinued and out of this came the present Big Tarkio Drainage District scheme.

On May 22, 1900, Judge Gallatin Craig granted a certificate of incorporation to the Squaw Creek Drainage District No. 1. The district includes the drainage of some 20,000 acres and the purpose of the ditch is to drain the overflow coming from Squaw Creek, Davis Creek, Cannon's branch, Kimsey Creek, Porter Creek, etc., and the surface water which falls upon the lands of the district. The work was begun in February, 1905. It was completed July 31, 1906. The cost of the main ditch and its lateral ditches involved the removal of 800,789 cubic yards of earth, to pay for which the district issued \$80,000 in bonds, bearing date July 1, 1904. Little & Hays, of St. Louis, took the bonds at 98c on the dollar and to bear 6 per cent interest. The main ditch is 26 feet at the bottom and 40 feet at the top, and required the moving of 355,000 cubic yards of earth. The ditches have a total distance of some 13 miles. Up to this time this was the biggest drainage scheme in this county and in this part of the country. It is 40 feet wide and 30 feet deep and is doing its work.

In 1904, came the proposition of organizing the Nodaway Drainage District No. 1, but was not incorporated until the August term, 1905, and Wm. M. Morris was the first secretary and J. W. Patterson its president. In July, 1906, the contract was let to John Gilligan for \$40,000. September, 1906, it issued \$50,000 in bonds. It is about 7 miles in length and will drain 5,000 acres. It begins in sec. 27, 62, 37, including lands in Nodaway and Andrew counties, running along the river south to 36, 61, 37. It is not yet finished and litigation is pending on account of the failure of the contractor to finish the work. John Morris and John Peret were the engineers. It is 24x16 feet with laterals, and as far as completed is doing its work.

While this work on No. 1 was progressing, the lower land owners from section 36, 61, 37 south, to the south line of 19, 59, 36, organized Nodaway Drainage district No. 2, and the greater portion of the lands being in Andrew county, it was incorporated in Andrew county. \$21,000 in bonds were voted. It too, is not yet finished. About one-third of the cost will be borne by the land owners in Holt county. This district is about nine miles in length. It is about 30x6 feet with no laterals.

Mill Creek Drainage district was incorporated at the August 1907 term of our circuit court. Its head is just above Carzon, and runs southeast to the Missouri river, and is four miles in length. It issued \$40,000 in bonds, and its first board was composed of A. D. Taylor, A. J. Jimison, Peter Sipes, Philip Schlotzhauer and J. A. Williams. The first named was chosen president and the latter its secretary. W. Morris was the engineer.

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